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Viewing cable 09MANAGUA276, NICARAGUA'S OTHER SANDINISTAS: THE MRS' POSITION

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09MANAGUA276**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09MANAGUA276	2009-03-13 22:54	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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PP RUEHLMC
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P 132254Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3878
INFO RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RHBVJPX/COMPHIBRON SIX PRIORITY
RHBPCOM/USNS COMFORT PRIORITY
RHBPCOM/MEDTRE FAC COMFORT PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 000276

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NICARAGUA'S OTHER SANDINISTAS: THE MRS' POSITION
AFTER THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

REF: A. 08 MANAGUA 1261

[B](#). 08 MANAGUA 761

Classified By: CDA Richard Sanders, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In hindsight after the November 2008 municipal elections, Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS) President Enrique Saenz believes his party made the correct choice in supporting candidates opposed to the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). MRS participation in the elections as a "coalition" partner allowed the party to remain a relevant political actor, and increased its favorable rating among the Nicaraguan electorate. From now until the 2011 national elections, Saenz stated that his party would focus on consolidating its political base in the urban centers along Nicaragua's Pacific coast, and try to capitalize on newly identified demographic groups of rural and young voters. The MRS will continue to pursue legal means to regain its party registration, Saenz stated, and that with or without registration, the MRS would almost certainly participate in the 2011 national elections in a coalition with other opposition parties. End Summary.

Lessons Learned

[1](#)2. (C) In a March 9 meeting, MRS President Enrique Saenz described to PolOff the party's decision to support the November 2008 municipal election candidates who opposed the FSLN candidates (ref A). The decision was contentious and not all members of the national committee agreed, but at the end the party followed the decision in unison. The exception to this was National Assembly Deputy Monica Baltodano, whom Saenz described as an outsider within the party. Saenz explained that MRS national figures' participation in the opposition's campaign allowed the MRS to remain a relevant political actor rather than fall into the FSLN's trap of becoming a spectator of the nation's politics. The decision, he added, gave the MRS a vehicle through which to continue to promote itself with the electorate. Saenz admitted that working with the Liberal opposition in the campaign allowed his party to overcome some biases it had against the Liberals and similarly allowed the Liberals to overcome some of biases against the MRS. Finally, the MRS' participation in the elections allowed for the continuing erosion of the FSLN's support base.

[1](#)3. (C) Following the elections, the MRS contracted a polling group to conduct surveys and focus groups to gain a better understanding of the party's national standing. The results

confirmed what the party previously knew - i.e., its strongest base was in urban centers along Nicaragua's Pacific coast. However, the surveys and focus groups also presented new data to the party. First, MRS popularity in the rural areas was increasing. Second, the MRS rated higher than any other opposition party among Nicaragua's youth. With this information, Saenz stated that his party would work to consolidate its bases in urban centers, but also work to capitalize on these two newly identified demographic groups - rural and youth voters. In its efforts to strengthen its organization and support base, Saenz noted the party had one obstacle it needed to overcome. Saenz admitted that while Nicaraguans generally viewed the MRS favorably, there was still an unknown factor that inhibited voters from formally joining the party.

Looking to 2011

¶4. (C) In June 2008 the government stripped the MRS of its legal registration, barring the party from participating in Nicaraguan elections for four years (ref B). Since that time the party has attempted to regain its legal registration through legal recourses, both in Nicaragua and through the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. However, Saenz recognized that only a political decision by Ortega's government based on one of two reasons would lead to the party regaining its legal registration. One reason would be if Ortega needed to portray an image of openness and commitment to democracy to the international community in

MANAGUA 00000276 002 OF 002

order that foreign assistance resume to Nicaragua. The other reason would be Ortega's desire to divide the opposition during elections to strengthen the FSLN's ability to win at the polls.

¶5. (C) Saenz was uncertain if the government would return to the MRS its legal registration, but this was not of utmost importance to him. The legal registration, he said, was only needed during elections, which are still two years away. At this moment the MRS would concentrate on capitalizing on the political relevance of the party by strengthening its bases regardless of the legal structure. Ultimately, Saenz believed that the MRS would almost certainly participate in the 2011 national elections in a coalition against the ruling FSLN, rather than go it alone at the polls.

Comment

¶6. (C) Accounting for approximately 10% of the nationwide electorate, the MRS remains a minority party in Nicaraguan politics. However, its participation as a coalition partner in the November 2008 municipal elections was seen as a key factor that led to the opposition's wins in big cities such as Managua and Leon, although the government ultimately stole these elections through fraud. While the MRS decided late in the electoral calendar to support Liberal opposition candidates, the party made the right decision and, more importantly, its leaders recognize that they made the right decision. Their collaboration in the November elections with the Liberal opposition and the Conservative Party demonstrated to all the ability of the MRS to work together toward a common goal and the necessity of maintaining unity against the ruling FSLN. Prior to the 2011 national elections, the MRS, as well as other opposition parties, will work to strengthen its support base. The MRS has correctly concluded that Nicaragua's current political environment will force all opposition parties to work together to defeat Ortega and the FSLN in 2011. While the national elections are still two years away, at least the MRS and other opposition parties appear to be heading in the right direction.

